

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05 MCT-01

CU-02 /082 W

----- 083972

R 301319Z SEP 76

FM AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8104

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMCONSUL IZMIR

AMCONSUL ADANA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISTANBUL 3858

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, TU

SUBJ: SERIES OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS IN ISTANBUL

REF: A) ISTANBUL 3540 B) ISTANBUL 2952

SUMMARY: OVER PAST WEEK, ISTANBUL RESIDENTS HAVE WITNESSED A SERIES OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS WHICH HAVE LEFT THEM WONDERING WHETHER THIS IS HARBINGER FOR MORE BLOODY COURSE OF EVENTS. THREE BANK ROBBERIES, AT LEAST ONE OF THEM MOUNTED BY TERRORIST GROUP, A VIOLENT CLASH BETWEEN WORKERS AND POLICE IN A LABOR DISPUTE AT ONE OF THE CITY'S LARGER INDUSTRIAL PLANTS, AND FIRST STUDENT DEATH OF NEW ACADEMIC YEAR OCCURRED DURING THIS PERIOD. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO INFORMATION GIVEN PRESS BY ISTANBUL ACTING POLICE CHIEF NIHAT KANER, FOUR SUSPECTS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE EXTREME LEFT TURKISH PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT PARTY, HAVE BEEN ARRESTED. THREE WERE CAUGHT SEPTEMBER 24 IN STOLEN TAXI AS THEY PREPARED TO ROB A BANK. A MACHINE GUN, PISTOLS AND THREE HAND GRENADES WERE CONFISCATED AT TIME OF ARREST BUT TWO OTHER MEN IN THE CAR

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ESCAPED. ONE OF THEM WAS ARRESTED NEXT DAY IN HOUSE WHERE MORE

WEAPONS WERE FOUND. SUBSEQUENTLY POLICE OFFICIALS INFORMED CONGEN EMPLOYEE THAT A FIFTH ARREST IN CASE WAS MADE SEPTEMBER 29 IN RAID ON BUILDING LOCATED IN VICINITY OF CONSULATE GENERAL. IDENTITY OF FIFTH PERSON HAS NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC BUT OTHER FOUR ARE REPORTED IN NEWSPAPERS TO BE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AND FROM PHOTOGRAPHS APPEAR TO BE IN THEIR TWENTIES.

2. SEPTEMBER 30 EDITION OF ISTANBUL NEWSPAPERS CARRY STORIES ON TWO MORE BANK ROBBERIES; ONE SUCCESSFUL AND THE OTHER FOILED BY POLICE. ALTHOUGH NOT IDENTIFIED AS SUCH, ROBBERY AT BRANCH OF CONSTRUCTION AND CREDIT BANK WHICH WAS CARRIED OUT BY THREE ARMED BANDITS BEARS SOME RESEMBLANCE TO OTHER OPERATIONS BY TERRORIST GROUPS TO RAISE FUNDS. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO NEWSPAPERS ROBBERS GOT AWAY WITH ONLY ABOUT US \$1,000, OTHER ATTEMPT WAS BY SINGLE INDIVIDUAL WHO WAS APPREHENDED BY POLICE.

3. IN SEPARATE INCIDENT INVOLVING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ON SEPTEMBER 28, VIOLENCE AGAIN FLARED UP AT GALATASRAY ARCHITECTURE AND ENGINEERING COLLEGE, AND ONE STUDENT WAS KILLED IN GUNFIRE. ACCORDING TO PRESS, NUMBER OF RIGHT-WING STUDENTS WERE HOLDING MEETING AT HOSPITAL WHERE STUDENT WOUNDED IN INCIDENT AT GALATASARAY SEPTEMBER 7 IS CONFINED (REF A). CLASH WITH ANOTHER GROUP LEFT ONE DEAD AND TWO WOUNDED. ADDITIONAL INCIDENT APPARENTLY TOOK PLACE SAME DAY WHEN GROUP OF STUDENTS WENT TO MORGUE TO PICK UP BODY. NEWSPAPERS REPORT THAT 15 PERSONS WERE DETAINED BY POLICE IN CONNECTION WITH THESE VIOLENT ACTS. SEPTEMBER 30 EDITION OF TERCUMAN REPORTS YET ANOTHER FIGHT AMONG LEFT AND RIGHT WING STUDENTS IN ZETINBURNU AREA OF ISTANBUL WHICH LEFT TWO STUDENTS HOSPITALIZED WITH INJURIES.

4. EMPLOYERS UNION OF METAL PRODUCTS INDUSTRIES ANNOUNCED EARLIER THIS WEEK THAT ITS MEMBERS HAD FIRED SOME 250 EMPLOYEES IN ISTANBUL AREA FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN RECENT PROTEST STRIKES MOUNTED AGAINST PASSAGE OF STATE SECURITY COURT LEGISLATION. WHEN FOURTEEN OF THESE WORKERS RETURNED TO WRK SEPTEMBER 29 AT PROFILO FACTORY, ONE OF LARGEST HOME APPLIANCE PLANTS IN AREA, WORKERS AT PLANT RESISTED POLICE ATTEMPTS TO EJECT THEM. AS REPORTED IN PRESS, IN ENSUING MELEE EMPLOYEES AT PROFILO SEIZED PLANT AND BATTLED POLICE WITH ROCKS AND CLUBS. POLICE USED TEAR GAS TO TRY TO CONTROL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SITUATION AND TALLY OF INJURED INCLUDED TWO POLICEMEN AND SEVERAL WORKERS. PROFILO HAS THREATENED TO CLOSE PLANT IF EMPLOYEES, WHOSE UNION MADEN-IS IS MAJOR AFFILIATE OF DISK LABOR CONFEDERATION, DO NOT ABANDON THE DISPUTE.

5. ON IRONIC NOTE, PRESS ALSO REPORTS THAT LOCAL PROSECUTOR HAS TURNED FILE ON CASE AGAINST DISK LEADER KEMAL TURKLER AND FIVE OTHER DISK OFFICIALS FOR ORGANIZING ILLEGAL STRIKE OVER

TO ISTANBUL STATE SECURITY COURT. APPEARS DISK LEADERS MAY BE
TRIED BY VERY INSTITUTION THEY WERE SO VOCIFEROUSLY PROTESTING
AGAINST.

6. COMMENT: DESPITE RIGOROUS POLICE MEASURES TO INVESTIGATE
AND APPREHEND TERRORISTS IN ISTANBUL (REFS A AND B) THERE CONTINUES
TO BE FAIRLY FREQUENT TERRORIST ACTIVITY. DISK LABOR UNREST
FUELED BY PROTESTS OVER FIRING THEIR MEMBERS AND TRIAL OF THEIR LEADE
RS
SEEMS LIKELY TO CONTINUE IN ISTANBUL, WHICH IS CONFEDERATION'S
MAJOR STRONGHOLD. SERIOUS STUDENT VIOLENCE HAS ALREADY ERUPTED
EVEN THOUGH MAJOR UNIVERSITIES WHICH WERE THE SCENE OF THE BIGGEST
CLASHES LAST YEAR HAVE NOT YET BEGUN CLASSES FOR NEW ACADEMIC YEAR.
POLICE HAVE BEEN QUICK TO MOVE IN AND QUELCH CLASHES BETWEEN
MAOIST LEFT AND RIGHT WING STUDENTS, AND INCIDENTS HAVE SO FAR
NOT APPROACHED SCALE OF LAST
YEAR'S BLOODSHED. HOWEVER, RECENT FLURRY OF VIOLENT ACTIVITY
(ALTHOUGH INCIDENTS APPARENTLY ARE UNRELATED) MAY BE HARBINGER
OF MORE BLOODY EVENTS IN ISTANBUL, ESPECIALLY WHEN UNIVERSITIES OPEN
THEIR DOORS FOR REGULAR ACADEMIC YEAR.;
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, CRIMES, CIVIL DISORDERS, TERRORISTS, ARRESTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: powellba
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ISTANB03858
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760369-0711
From: ISTANBUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976094/aaaaacmh.tel
Line Count: 136
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 ISTANBUL 3540, 76 ISTANBUL 2952
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: powellba
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUN 2004 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <22 OCT 2004 by powellba>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SERIES OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS IN ISTANBUL
TAGS: PINS, PINT, TU
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006